

REMARKS

Applicants respectfully request favorable reconsideration of this application, as amended.

By this Amendment, Claims 1-17 have been cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer in favor of newly presented Claims 18-24, of which Claims 18 and 24 are dependent. The cancellation of Claims 1-17 of course moots the objections as well as the rejection asserted in the outstanding Office Action. Moreover, it is apparent that the newly presented claims distinguish patentably from Beia, which was cited as the basis for the rejection of Claims 1-17 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b).

As set forth in independent Claim 18, for example, Applicants' invention provides a hole cover for a vehicle, for covering an opening of a tubular member attached to a panel and through which a steering element is to pass. The hole cover comprises a seal body made mainly of elastic material and including an elastic seal portion having a steering penetration portion through which the steering element passes and with which the steering element makes sliding contact in a rotational direction. The hole cover additionally comprises a seal retaining member which fits on the seal body. The seal retaining member has a plurality of latch projections adapted to be

pressed against the tubular member substantially along an axis of the steering element so as to be caught in a latch recess formed in a vicinity of an axial end of the tubular member. When the latch projections are caught in the latch recess, the seal retaining member presses the seal body against the axial end of the tubular member so that the elastic seal portion of the seal body is brought into pressure contact with a sealing surface formed at the axial end of the tubular member.

As set forth in independent Claim 24, a hole cover in accordance with Applicants' invention comprises a seal body made mainly of elastic material and including an elastic seal portion having a steering penetration portion through which the steering element passes and with which the steering element makes sliding contact in a rotational direction. The hole cover additionally comprises a seal retaining member which fits on the seal body, and a plurality of latch means for latching the seal retaining member with the tubular member substantially along an axis of the steering element. When the seal retaining member is latched to the tubular member by the latch means, the seal retaining member presses the seal body against an axial end of the tubular member so that the elastic seal portion of the seal body is brought into pressure contact with a

sealing surface formed at the axial end of the tubular member.

It is apparent that Beia does not disclose or suggest a device having the aforementioned features of Claims 18 and 24.

Accordingly, it is respectfully requested that the outstanding objections and rejection be withdrawn and that this application be passed to issue.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge to Deposit Account No. 50-1165 (XA-10296) any fees under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16 and 1.17 that may be required by this paper and to credit any overpayment to that Account. If any extension of time is required in connection with the filing of this paper and has not been separately requested, such extension is hereby requested.

Respectfully submitted,

August 25, 2008

By: /Mitchell W. Shapiro/
Mitchell W. Shapiro
Reg. No. 31,568

Miles & Stockbridge, P.C.
1751 Pinnacle Drive
Suite 500
McLean, Virginia 22102-3833
(703) 903-9000

MWS:ecr